

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3-6, 8-11, 13-15 and 18 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claim 17 is canceled, claims 1, 3 and 8 are amended and new claim 18 is added. No new matter is added.

Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication that claims 5, 6, 10, 11, 13 and 14 are allowable and that claim 17 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicants have amended independent claims 1, 3 and 8 to incorporate the subject matter of now canceled claim 17. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that all of the claims are now in condition for allowance.

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 3, 4, 8, 9 and 15 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ap (U.S. Patent No. 6,448,535) in view of Hamano et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,558,992) and Kutowy (U.S. Patent No. 4,395,130). Claims 1, 3 and 8 are independent claims from which claims 15, 4 and 8 respectively depend. As claim 17 is not rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), Applicants respectfully submit that this rejection is thus rendered moot by the incorporation of the subject matter of claim 17 into claims 1, 3 and 8. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1, 3, 4, 8, 9 and 15 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) are respectively requested.

In view of the remarks above, Applicants submit that this application is in condition for allowance and request favorable action thereon.

In the event this paper is not considered to be timely filed, Applicants hereby petition for an appropriate extension of time. The fee for this extension may be charged to our Deposit Account No. 01-2300. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fee

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deficiency or credit any overpayment associated with this communication to Deposit
Account No. 01-2300, referencing Attorney Docket No. 106145-00018.

Respectfully submitted,
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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert K. Carpenter", with a stylized flourish extending from the end.

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